

Asheville Police Department

Vehicle Theft

DID YOU KNOW? One vehicle is stolen every 20 seconds in the United States. Stolen cars, vans, trucks, and motorcycles cost victims time and money - and increase everyone's insurance premiums. They're also often used to commit other crimes.

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau the top five vehicles targeted in 2004 in North Carolina were 1) Honda Accord 2) Honda Civic 3) Jeep Cherokee/Grand Cherokee 4) Ford Explorer and 5) Toyota Camry.

No vehicle is 100% theft-proof. But by making your car a tougher target, you decrease the thief's opportunity to commit the theft and think he/she will "get away with it." Don't become a victim of this serious crime. The following tips may reduce the risks of your vehicle being stolen in the next 20 seconds:

- Take your keys. Never leave your keys in the vehicle or ignition. Cold weather prompts "warming up" the vehicle; if this is a necessity, never leave the vehicle unattended; use a spare key and lock the vehicle doors, but continue to monitor the vehicle.
- Never hide a second set of keys in your vehicle. Keep them in your wallet or purse.
- Never leave your vehicle "running" and unlocked while "you run inside the store for a minute." (see above)
- Always lock your vehicle, even if it's in front of your home.
- Keep the vehicle registration (which contains the vehicle identification number-VIN, and tag number) and title with you, not in the vehicle.
- Stolen vehicles are more easily traced when vehicle identification numbers (VIN) have been etched on vehicle windows. Drop business cards, address labels or other identification inside vehicle doors.
- Engrave with your VIN or personal identification number expensive accessories and major parts, i.e. rims, stereo systems, etc. These items may not be recovered with the vehicle.
- Keep the keys to your home and vehicle separate.
- Keep your vehicle in good running condition. Make sure there's enough gas to get to the desired destination and back.
- Avoid parking in isolated areas with little foot or auto traffic. Be especially alert in non-staffed lots and enclosed parking garages.
- If you park in an attended lot and have to leave your key with an attendant, leave only the ignition and door key.
- Completely close all vehicle windows when parked.
- Park your vehicle with wheels turned toward the curb. This will cause delay for the thief to make a quick get away.
- If your vehicle is rear-wheel drive, back into your driveway to make towing more difficult for thieves.
- If your vehicle is front-wheel drive, pull forward into your driveway.
- Always use your emergency brake when parked.
- If you have a garage, use it. Lock the garage door as well as your vehicle.
- Remove the electronic ignition fuse, coil wire, rotor distributor, or otherwise disable your vehicle if you are leaving it unattended for an extended period.
- Replace "T-shaped" door locks with straight locks.

Going the Extra Mile

- Ignition kill switches prevent the engine from starting.
- Fuel kill switches halt the fuel supply.
- Visible steering wheel locks prevent the steering wheel from being turned.
- Floorboard locks disable the gas or brake pedal to prevent the use of these pedals.

- Gearshift locks disable shifting of the transmission.
- Tire or wheel locks prevent the vehicle from moving.
- Hood locks prevent thieves from gaining access to your security system and battery.
- Armored collars around the steering column deter thieves from breaking into the steering column to get to the ignition wires.
- Audio alarms emit loud warning sounds when the doors, hood or trunk are opened.
- Vehicle tracking systems that are installed in your vehicle are activated when your car is stolen. These systems alert the police to the location of your vehicle for quick recovery.

Resources used to compile list of tips:

www.ncpc.org

www.watchyourcar.org/preventtheft

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA